

Two Minutes by dishwater_blondie

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Summary:

Joyce is about to see Hopper again for the first time since the summer.

Two Minutes

Author's Note:

Posted this guy on my Tumblr last week and wanted it to be here as well. I needed to write their reunion scene so bad.

Joyce has two minutes.

Her heart pounds like a clapper on the inside of a bell, tolling through her entire body like it has the power to knock her off her feet. She can hardly see. All her surroundings have faded into a murky gray blur, and desperately she is trying to blink it all back to clarity before the force of her trepidation has battered her senseless. She doesn't know when she stopped breathing, but she can't start again now. The cell door is opening.

He'll be there on the other side, and she has two minutes alone with him before their time is up and they have to go.

What to say in those two minutes, what to do?

He knows she is coming, but will he believe she is there? Joyce can barely believe it herself. The cell door is opening, and she should be at home. Joyce should be dreaming; she should be mad; she should have made this all up in her mind, grappling for an impossible reality that died many months ago.

But it is alive in this cell. Joyce thinks she may somehow die before she can see it. She thinks she can feel the heat of a gun barrel glaring into the back of her head like a penetrating eye. It's her imagination. She is alone. There is only her and him, and the cell door is opening between them.

Joyce doesn't know what to do. She must have planned it all out in her head, but she can't remember. Maybe she doesn't care. She wants to see him. For a moment, forgetting the gun on her hip and the radio on her shoulder and the stale, frigid air on her face, nothing else

matters.

The cell door is open.

Deep-set blue eyes find her at once, and Joyce lets out a small gasp. She freezes over, the shakiness of her body shocking into stillness. She can't feel anything but the pinch in her chest as her pulse skips a beat and then marches furiously on.

He is different. His head has been shaved to the scalp. His skin is pale and dry and a little gray. He is thin and the clothes hang off his body. He is unwell.

But he is Hopper. And he's got that look in his face she's been seeing in the dark when she closes her eyes, that tiny glint of something inexhaustibly charming and energetic, that leftover light from their youth, some sort of love of living that fell asleep and woke up again one day. Joyce watches it reignite once more in this awful artificial light. She watches his lips part with a brisk inhale, and she sees his body stall as if he second-guesses what to do.

But suddenly, Joyce knows. She takes a step into the cell, and then one more. The space is tight, and there's not much distance between them now. Her breath forms the shape of his name, this tiny wisp of "Jim" through the air, and as quiet as her voice is, it seems to strike him like a bullet. Hopper flinches with a gasp of his own. In an instant, his expression crumbles like a castle of sand beneath a breaking wave. Tears flood his gaze.

"Joyce," he wheezes. He closes the remaining space between them, taking her face between his rough and cold hands, but she can only soften into his touch. It's a touch she's yearned for all this time. "Oh God, Joyce."

He wraps his arms around her and lifts her off her feet. Joyce clings to him, hanging off his neck as she buries her face into his shoulder. Hopper spins her around. He sways back and forth on his feet as they go on like he's carrying her through a slow dance. Eyes shut, feet off the ground, feeling nothing but his embrace, Joyce forgets where she is for a moment, for one long and glorious moment. She cries against him.

“Hopper,” she says, her voice muffled by his shirt. He smells of sweat and something old, but that only makes him more real to her. “I thought you were gone.”

He puts her back down on the ground, fingers lacing through her hair as he continues to hold her against his chest. She can hear him sobbing. It’s a sound she’s heard so few times before.

“I thought I was gone too,” he murmurs.

Joyce finally pulls away, if only so she can look at his face again. She sets her fingers on his skin, feeling the texture of stubble, brushing away the wet streaks of tears. “I’m here,” she whispers.

He stares at her in wonder. A wild, uninhibited love flashes in his eyes, and it’s a love Joyce feels swelling within herself.

They don’t have much time. If Joyce could spend eternity in his arms, she would stay, but their two minutes are winding down fast. The rest of the escape plan is solid – she went into this sure of that – but now that she has her hands on his skin, her eyes tracing every detail of his visage, she is overcome by the fear that this could be the last moment she has with him before something goes wrong again. Cleaving them apart for one final time.

But instead of waiting for that terror to swallow her, Joyce lets it propel her ahead. She clutches the collar of his shirt, and before she’s quite sure what she’s even doing, he has already met her halfway. Hopper’s kiss is hungry and desperate as her own, but with the passage of what precious time they still have, it starts to soften. Joyce sighs and cups his jaw, wishing she had done this a long, long time ago, hoping she’ll have the chance to do it again and again.

“We need to leave,” she murmurs when she finally breaks the kiss. “It’s time to go home.”

Hopper releases her with one last caress. His eyes blaze with an icy blue ferocity, a silent promise to make it back with her right there at his side. Together at last. He smiles and says, “Lead the way, Joyce.”

Author's Note:

Thanks for reading! Hope you'll leave a comment

